

A  
REVIEW  
OF  
MR. SEWARD'S DIPLOMACY.  
BY  
A NORTHERN MAN.

"To a people who once have been proud and great, and great because they were proud, a change in the national spirit is the most terrible of all revolutions."—BURKE.

223

IN EXCHANGE

Cornell University

31

## REVIEW OF MR. SEWARD'S DIPLOMACY.

---

MR. LINCOLN, in his Message of December last, said little about the foreign relations of the United States. In general phraseology, he attributed to European Governments unworthy motives in the policy which he ascribed to them, but as to their precise relations to us, or what we had said or done to them, he was, if not silent, darkly oracular.\*

The silence of the Chief Magistrate on Foreign affairs was not thoughtless. It would be unjust to him to suppose it was. He delegated the duty to his Secretary of State, and hence, for the first time in the history of the United States, there was sent to Congress a mass of Foreign Relation correspondence—extending, if not from “China to Peru,” literally from Japan to Chili—which, having been printed in a huge book of four hundred and twenty-five pages by

---

\* This was, at the time, the subject of criticism among his friends; for one of the leading, most judicious, most thorough-going, and able newspapers, startled by the ominous omission, said:

“We cannot avoid expressing regret that more confident phrases were not employed in the President’s allusions to our foreign relations—not that what he does say is particularly despondent, but there is an absence of allusion to the special encouragement offered to us by many governments, which we regret. It may be thought of little consequence, whether the formulas of executive congratulation as regards foreign nations, are repeated, while we have so much grave matter at home to attend to, but we believe the general feeling would have been one of pleasure at their repetition now.”—*Philadelphia North American*, Dec. 4.

the Secretary himself and circulated to a certain extent, is open to fair and patriotic criticism. Since this volume was published, another instalment of diplomatic correspondence, connected with the sad affair of the Trent, has been given to the world; and to the whole record, ending as we think it does, in the realization of Mr. Burke's philosophy, that the most terrible of revolutions is one which breaks a proud nation's heart, in a spirit of genuine and rational loyalty, we invite the attention of our readers. Philip, we are inclined to hope, is fast becoming sober, and will listen.

That it is unusual, and on general principles inexpedient, with no special call on one part, and without reserve on the other, to lay wholesale diplomatic correspondence before the watching and perhaps censorious world, and especially the confidential instructions sent to all our Ministers, will hardly be disputed. There is no precedent for it, at home or abroad. Self-glorification, a greed for literary or political laurels, is, at any time, a poor motive. Here it is a mischievous one, and a few instances will show how damaging to the public service such careless revelations may be.

On the 22d of June, 1861, Mr. Seward wrote a despatch of a most delicate nature, to Mr. Dayton, at Paris—at once minatory and persuasive—concluding with these words: "This despatch is strictly confidential." So Mr. Dayton had a right to think it would be, and one may imagine his surprise to find it so soon in print, without any call from Congress, or any public exigency. The assurance that a letter is confidential, even in private correspondence, is a pledge which cannot be withdrawn but by mutual consent. Still more sacred should it be, when public interests are at stake, and when public conduct ought to be regulated by absolute confidence and good faith.

The remark applies with greater force to the inculpatory despatch of the 6th of July, 1861, in which he says to Mr. Dayton: "This paper is, in one sense, a conversation

merely, between yourself and us. *It is not to be made public.*" Yet it, too, is spread before the world.

Again : On the 2d of September—it was most natural that the Secretary should say to Mr. Adams, if such was the fact—"Our supplies of arms are running low." But one is at a loss to know why this destitution should be published to the world.

Or again, and these instances are taken at random from many others, may we not be excused for doubting the expediency, if not propriety of giving publicity to the fact that information sent by Mr. Adams from London was used for detective police purposes in this country? It may be all right to get such information, and, if a Secretary of State has any taste for police work, it may be all right to use it. But is it conducive to the public interest, or creditable to the public character, or fair to a distant correspondent, to make it known?

A long time, some eighty-four years ago, Sir Joseph Yorke was shrewdly suspected of abstracting Arthur Lee's portfolios at the Court of Frederick the Great, and making himself acquainted with their contents; but we are not aware that Lord North or Lord George Germaine ever publicly thanked him for his "vigilant surveillance." Not that it is for a moment imagined that Mr. Adams went to this extent of zeal, or dreamed of being thanked for such work, but he certainly sent home information of a secret nature, which was used for police purposes, and the fact is now revealed, for no conceivable reason, and must discourage him from doing it again. "While I regret," says Mr. Seward in the despatch now printed, "with you, that the administration of the laws of Great Britain is such as to render comparatively ineffectual your efforts to defeat there the designs of parties in that country injurious to the United States—I have great pleasure in saying that the information we receive from you concerning them is often very valuable, and enables us *to put our own authorities*

*here in a way of vigilant surveillance, which promises good results."*

So wrote Secretary Seward on the 14th of September: and it was not very long after—the 14th of October—that Lord Lyons sent to him the note in which he said: "So far as appears to Her Majesty's government, the Secretary of State of the United States exercises upon the reports of *spies and informers*, the power of depriving British subjects of their liberty, of retaining them in prison, or liberating them by his own will and pleasure." The letter now published throws a painful light on this incident, and somewhat explains why Lord Lyons' insult, (for such it would be to a man conscious of innocence,) was never resented. Mr. Seward *was* engaged in police duty.

Again, and let it be borne in mind we are now only illustrating the folly, or worse than folly, of publishing these papers—there is a small but pregnant chapter devoted to our relations with Austria, whose favor, possibly with a view to the conciliation of the Hungarians and Italians now encamped on the Potomac or in Missouri, Mr. Seward seems especially anxious to secure. He assures Mr. Hulsemann, not only of his personal consideration, but especially "of the good will of this Government towards the Government of Austria;" and Mr. Jones that it is "our purpose to cultivate the best understanding with all nations which respect our rights, as Austria does;" and Mr. Motley, as late as September 20th, is directed to "inform Count Rechberg, that the friendly sentiments of this Government towards Austria, remain unchanged"—and yet by the strange fatality which can be demonstrated to attend all Mr. Seward's diplomacy, he (for it is his act) publishes in this volume, an ethnological and political essay on the Austrian empire, in the form of instructions to Mr. Burlingame, which we venture to predict will astonish Count Rechberg and Mr. Hulsemann, and we fear interfere with the success of the eminent historian of the Revolt of the Netherlands,

at the Court of His Imperial Royal Catholic Majesty. Years ago, Mr. Hulsemann was justly aggrieved by being told in a celebrated rhetorical despatch, that "Austria was a mere patch on the earth's surface." He now has to learn from the strange publication before us, and especially from the following sentence quoted literally, what sort of a rickety government he represents, and that while our country is filled with Magyars, and Jews, and Germans, every one is ashamed to admit he is an Austrian. In point of fact, Mr. Seward may be right. We repeat, we have only to do with his want of reticence on tender topics. Telling Mr. Burlingame (whose translation to China renders these ethnological hints of no value to him) that Austria is "a field for improvement;" that the Lombards, "whose provinces have recently been lost," are "more mercurial than the Germans;" that while "an undue portion of Austria is mountainous," nowhere "does agriculture derive more wealth from hard soils and ungenial skies:" he gracefully and agreeably says, and now publishes, and we repeat, to satisfy those who may pause in wonder and incredulity over some of the words, we quote literally:

"Austria is not an *unique* country, with a homogeneous people. It is a combination of kingdoms, duchies, provinces, and countries, added to each other by force, and subjected to an Imperial head, but remaining at the same time diverse, distinct and discordant. The empire is therefore destitute of that element of nationality, which is essential to the establishment of free intercourse with remote foreign states. We meet everywhere here, in town and country, Italians, Hungarians, Poles, Magyars, Jews, and Germans, but no one has ever seen a *confessed Austrian* amongst us."\*

---

\* There is no light shed by this volume on the facts connected with the refusal of the Austrian Court to receive Mr. Burlingame.

But again—and with this, we close the chapter of minor criticism—indiscreet revelations are not confined to Mr. Seward's own compositions, over which he may think he has control, for he has published despatches from abroad and in doing so cannot fail to annoy and embarrass our Ministers at the courts where, now more than ever, their position is critical, and hold them up to the ridicule and obloquy of Europe. Nay, further, these rash revelations may well startle our own countrymen, and Mr. Lincoln himself, when they discover that some of our ministers have, at Mr. Seward's bidding, or at least without his rebuke, committed the government to the policy of unconditional emancipation and wholesale abolition—not the abolition which, as a military necessity, is supposed to march in the van or follow in the desolate track of armies—but sentimental abolition—Exeter-Hall, New York Tabernacle abolition. We have room here but for a single instance of unhappy and mischievous disclosure, and we make it from a most remarkable despatch from Mr. Cassius M. Clay, dated at St. Petersburg, 21st June, 1861, of which we can only say that we scarcely dare ask our readers to credit our citations, and beg them to verify what we quote by reference to the originals, should [those ordered by Congress ever be printed. In this despatch, he narrates his being presented to the Emperor at Peterhoff by the master of ceremonies, “who is the regular introducer,” and the further facts that “twice the Czar shook hands with him;” that he compared him to Peter the Great; and then adds that the Emperor told him: “in addition to all former ties, we are bound together by a common cause of emancipation.” “He wanted to know if I thought England would interfere? I told him we did not care what she did.” “The Emperor seemed to like my defiance of old John Bull very much;” and Mr. Clay's despatch concludes with a passage on which no other comment is necessary than this, that while we may not wonder at such vulgar nonsense



being written, we thought there were discretion enough in the old clerks at what Mr. Seward somewhere describes as "the modest little State Department," to prevent it being published.

"I have already," writes Mr. Clay, "made this letter too long, but I cannot conclude without saying how much more and more I value the great and inestimable blessings of our Government, and how I trust in God that no compromise will be made of the great idea for which we have so long fought, but that General Scott, following out the programme of Mr. Lincoln's inaugural, will slowly and surely subdue the rebellion, 'stock, lock and gun-barrel,' 'hook, line and bob-sinker.' "

One might pause and smile, were it not the hour of our country's agony and our country's shame, at such ineffable trash as this, thus written and thus proclaimed. But it is too solemn for levity.

And can it be possible, the reader may well ask, that there is not injustice in imputing these discreditable revelations to the desire of self-glorification in a single man? There is no wish to do wrong to anybody, least of all to the distinguished official who, so long as the endurance of the people and the amiable credulity of the Chief Magistrate continue, must be looked on as our "organ" in the foreign relations of the country, but there is proof, abundant and conclusive, on these pages, that no other or higher motive could have led to the publication. There is a mischievous egotism throughout, which tells its own tale. Mr. Lincoln has not yet discovered the extent of the restless ambition that stirs the heart of his Foreign Secretary. He certainly had not, when he consented to be measurably silent on foreign affairs, and delegated them, with all their glories, to Mr. Seward.

Mr. Seward evidently thinks that a Secretary of State is, in the parlance of other countries, a "Prime Minister," a "Premier," a "First Lord of the Treasury," and that a

Prime Minister is something in foreign affairs which absorbs or controls all governmental functions. This un-American, unconstitutional theory crops out very often in this volume of his pet despatches. He is singularly fond of the magnificent first person plural—that pseudo-modest pronoun which kings and queens and critics and newspaper editors, and sometimes pamphleteers, indulge in. Most Secretaries in writing, say, “The President instructs me,” “It is the wish of the President,” etc. This is the safe, modest language of routine, but Mr. Seward soars far beyond the stretch of decorous red tape, and fairly revels in “we” and “our.” “The opinions,” he writes to Mr. Adams, “you expressed on these matters, etc., are just, and meet *our* approbation.” “Our” instructions is a common phrase. “This is a conviction between yourself and *us*.” There is a little doubtful grammar in the following sentence in a despatch to Mr. Dayton, but the pronoun has its usual prominence: “The despatches of your predecessor, Nos. 117, 119 and 120, have been received; the latter, (?) acknowledging the receipt of *our* letter, requires no special notice.” And so throughout, until Mr. Seward’s theory of “*L’état, c’est moi*,” freely translated, culminates in a despatch to Mr. Marsh, of the 9th of May, where, either purposely or from grammatical confusion, he leaves it doubtful who constitutes the Sovereign of Italy, the King or Count Cavour, though with an evident leaning to the side of the Prime Minister. We note among the few instances in which the President is not eclipsed by the Secretary, one on which we may well pause in wonder and regret; for while no other Minister is equally honored in these despatches, we learn that the one so distinguished cannot be induced to remain at his post. “These thoughts,” says Mr. Seward to Mr. Carl Schurz, “are presented to you by direction of the President, not as exhausting the subject, but only as suggestions to your own vigorous and comprehensive mind, and he confidently relies on your applying all

its powers to the full discussion of the subject, if it shall become necessary." If in the *lucunae* which follow this special compliment to Mr. Carl Schurz, there are hidden stronger expressions of confidence and affection on the part of the Chief Magistrate, the country may well regret that Mr. Schurz no longer represents us at the Court of Her Most Catholic Majesty.

Assuming, then, that the authorship of this volume was meant to be claimed as one of the literary and political trophies of the Secretary of State, we venture, with the deference due to a high official, and a reserve prompted by considerations of personal safety, to consider, from a literary and a political point of view, the papers themselves.

First, of their literary merits.

In the name of American scholarship and taste, which we may be permitted to hope survive, in spite of the newspapers and magazines we read, we protest against Mr. Seward being taken as the representative of American scholars, or his tawdry effusions as fair specimens of American writing. If we had to choose, we much prefer the homely, honest style of the President, no doubt characteristic of the man and of his social meridian, through which a meaning struggles for expression, to the ambitious, affected, bungling rhetoric of the Secretary. When, in spite of clumsy syntax, an idea is visible, we rest content; but when one reads a sentence, or a series of sentences, technically correct and elaborately adorned, and finds no light or glimpse of meaning, the very accuracy and finish make the disappointment sharper. When Mr. Lincoln speaks of the doctrine of rebellion being "sugar-coated," we smile at the illustration, but accept it; but when, scorning all Saxon phrase, Mr. Secretary Seward writes to Mr. Burlingame, "that Austria is not an *unique* country," or that, "in the intercourse of nations, each must be assumed by every other to choose and will what it maintains, tolerates or allows," or that "sedition has begun its incubation," or that "we

are so sound, so vigorous, and so strong ;” or when writing to Mr. Harris at Yedo, he says : “ I have lost no time in assuring the British Government directly of the willingness of the United States to co-operate with it in any judicious measure it may suggest to insure safety hereafter to diplomatic and consular representatives of the Western Powers in Japan, with due respect to the sovereignties, on whose behalf their exposure to such grave perils is incurred ;” or writing to Nicaragua, he talks of the “ virgin domain of Spanish America,” and “ the listless nations of the East ;” or when writing to Mr. Marsh, at Turin, he assures him “ that war cannot be waged successfully, without wisdom as well as patriotism ;” or to the same gentleman, (an educated man, to whom such suggestions were hardly necessary,) that “ Botta and De Tocqueville” are clever writers, or that “ faction is incident to every state, because it is inherent in human nature,” or that the American people “ are aroused, awakened, resolute and determined,” or that time was needed “ to eliminate the disunionists from high position ;” or to Mr. King, that the United States are like ancient Rome, “ because they are on the verge of civil war ;” or to Mr. Schurz, that Spanish intervention would be “ an episode” of the war, or that “ Her Majesty’s obligations shall be meliorated,” and those of the United States “ similarly meliorated :” or that the articles of the Declaration of Paris are “ benignant,” or that “ the fountains of discontent are many, and some lie much deeper than others,” with the remarkable historical statement, over which De Tocqueville might pause in perplexity, “ that it was foreign intervention which opened, and that alone could open similar fountains in the memorable French Revolution ;” \* that the “ trans-

---

\* Mr. Seward is not very precise or accurate in either geography or history. Witness his description of the British Colonial Empire, as “ extending from Gibraltar, through the West Indies and Canada, till it begins again on the southern extremity of Africa ;” and the historical *dicta* that “ armed insur-

action now going on in our own country involves the progress of civilization and humanity, and that our attitude in it is right;" that "domestic commotion has ripened into a vast transaction;" or writing to the Minister in Switzerland, he exhorts him "to improve the calmness and candour which the contemplation of nature inspires, to dissuade the American from his unnatural course and pernicious convictions," and to excite the loyal to return home as speedily as possible, to speak, to vote, and if need be, to enrol himself as a soldier or sailor, in the land or naval forces, for the defence of the country, of freedom, and of mankind!" or when he tells Mr. Schurz that his speech to the Queen of Spain was "discreet in its points and felicitous in its expression;" or when finally, in the instructions to Mr. Cassius Clay, the Secretary reaches a climax of mysterious rhetoric, and announces a great ethnological and geographical truth, in these words, quoted, we assure the reader, literally: "Russia and the United States may remain good friends, until each, having made the circuit of half the globe in opposite directions, they shall meet and greet each other in the region where civilization first began, and where, after so many ages, it has become now lethargic and helpless." When we repeat, one has to wade through grotesque platitudes such as these, silly and inappropriate anywhere, but never so much so as in what purport to be

---

reactions to overturn the Government are frequent in Great Britain;" that "most of the wars in modern times have been insurrectionary wars;" that "the Government of the Netherlands is probably an ally of Japan;" or, lastly, his singular obliviousness of the history of his own country, and of what Silas Deane and Dr. Franklin and the Lees and John Adams were sent to do and did, in Europe, eighty years ago, when he writes to Mr. Schurz that "it seems the necessity of faction in every country, that whenever it acquires sufficient boldness to inaugurate revolution, it forgets alike the counsels of prudence, and stifles the instincts of patriotism, and becomes a suitor to foreign courts for aid and assistance." &c.

State papers, we revolt, and gratefully take refuge in Mr. Lincoln's awkward grammar, and clumsy but honest idioms.

Nay, further. Mr. Seward's vicious style has what lawyers call an inheritable and transferable quality. His son, the Assistant Secretary, writes, if possible, worse than the father, and one need only refer to Mr. Clay's despatches from Russia, Mr. Fogg's marvellous speeches in Switzerland, and Mr. Perry's letters from Spain, to see with what fidelity the wretched rhetoric of the Secretary is reflected by his subordinates. Mr. Frederick W. Seward writes to Mr. Adams, on the 27th of August, that "the capital is beyond danger, and forces are accumulating, and *taking on* qualities which will render them invincible." "The sentiment of disunion," he adds, "is losing its expansive force, and every day grows weaker as a physical power." Mr. Fogg, in addressing the President of the Swiss Confederation, says: "There are *crises* in the lives of nations, as well as of individuals. Switzerland has had her *crisis*. The United States has had her *crisis*. When Washington led her brave sons to maintain her right to be one of the nations of the world, then was her *crisis*. Her second great *crisis* is now. This *crisis* shall be decided for liberty," &c.; and Mr. Horatio Perry tells the Secretary that "secession is filibustering struck in," and that there is a class of men in the South known as "mean whites."

Let no one suppose that this terrible deterioration in the style of State papers is of little moment. A master of vigorous English writing long ago said that the decrepitude of language, in a nation's public utterances, is a fatal sign; and we have lately somewhere seen the striking and truthful remark that a debased tone in public documents is a pregnant symptom of political disease.\* So, we feel it to be, with this volume before us. So, foreign and censorious nations will regard it; and the humbling contrast, in this

---

\* Walter Savage Landor.

very article of literary merit, between Mr. Seward and all his predecessors, from the time of General Washington's administration, is too palpable to be overlooked. Every Secretary of State who has left a name in our history, wrote vigorous, characteristic English, modified in mere rhetorical completeness, by difference of culture. It is only necessary to call the roll of the eminent men who have conducted the foreign policy of this Government from 1789 to this moment to understand this, and to see that, until Mr. Seward "assumed the seals," there was not one who did not appear to advantage, by contrast or comparison with the most accomplished statesmen on the other side of the Atlantic. They were Jefferson, Edmund Randolph, Pickering, Marshall, Madison, Monroe, Adams, Clay, Van Buren, Louis M'Lane, Forsyth, Webster, Upshur, Calhoun, Buchanan, Clayton, Everett, Marey, Cass, and Black; and if, taking an illustration from the very volume before us, any one yet doubts how far below the standard Mr. Seward, as a writer, is, let him compare all or any of his despatches with the one from Secretary Black, of the 28th February, 1861, now published, in which, with precision and clearness, without pretension or affectation, but directly and earnestly, he calls the attention of our Ministers abroad to the great social and political convulsion then felt to be imminent, and prescribes their duty. The great secret, said the poet Gray, of study, and he might have added of composition, is "never to fling away your time in reading inferior authors, but to keep your mind in contact with master spirits;" in plain English, to avoid low company. Mr. Seward writes like a man who has been reading newspapers and associating with half-educated politicians all his life, and the character of American scholarship suffers, by his being thought to be its representative.

Passing by all this, we approach the substance of these despatches—the diplomatic conduct of Mr. Lincoln's cabinet—and we undertake to demonstrate that it has been, so

far at least as the action of the State Department is involved, a total failure, ending, as we fear is the case, either in a foreign embroilment on false principles, or, what is worse, in degradation by unmanly and inappropriate concessions. This is strong language, but unless our estimate of the evidence before us be wholly erroneous, quite warranted.

Let us for a moment look a little at the recent past.

Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1861, and Mr. Seward became at once Secretary of State. His first despatch bears date the 9th of March, being a circular to all the Ministers of the United States abroad, containing the assurance that "the President entertains a full confidence in the speedy restoration of the harmony and the unity of the Government." Mr. Black had said the same thing ten days before.

From the 4th of March to the fall of Fort Sumter on the 13th of April, the secession, or revolt, or rebellion, (we do not pause to quarrel with names or nicknames,) had extended to but seven States. All as far south as North Carolina and Tennessee were in the Union, and faithful to it. The Peace Congress had just adjourned; the Corwin Constitutional Amendment was just adopted; the vote of North Carolina had been adverse to a convention; Virginia, and Kentucky, and Maryland, and Tennessee, had given no sign of disloyalty.

Then it was that the President made his diplomatic appointments, making, be it remembered, not one from the slaveholding or moderate States, except Mr. Cassius M. Clay, an avowed and extreme, and we believe, conscientious abolitionist. All the Union men in the doubtful States were proscribed in this distribution of what may be described as the confidential and complimentary patronage of the Government, and instead of them, there were sent abroad to represent us, at this "crisis" of our destiny, with the exception of England, France and Italy, whither men of capacity and education were sent, a crowd of obscure and untrained



men, fanatical stump speakers and newspaper purveyors, from the North, exclusively, whose very names (the Pikes, and Foggs, and Judds,) remind one of the grotesque nomenclature of one of Mr. Dickens' novels, and whose performances are recorded in the volume before us. There seemed to be a studied insult to the moderate slaveholding States. A correspondent or semi-editor of the New York Tribune was sent to Holland, and to Spain, the most conservative, religious, and perhaps bigoted court of Europe, was sent a German adventurer (the word is not used in an offensive sense,) who, but a few months before, in a reported speech, had said to the South: "When all mankind rejoice, you tremble. What all mankind love, you hate. There is not a man in the South, who if he can bye-and-bye, raise from the dead, will not gladly exchange his epitaph for the meanest of John Brown's followers."\*

Nor was this unadvised; the Secretary of State, in one of his speeches during the political canvass, had foreshadowed it, by saying, (what almost in terms, he repeats more than once in these papers,) that, as the Courts of Europe had heretofore, and especially during Mr. Buchanan's administration, been filled by Southern men and advocates of slavery, the new era was to be marked by the choice of those who would unite in the general reprobation of slavery, all over the civilized world. The selection as ambassadors of anti-slavery agitators, and the proscription of all the moderate South, was therefore not accidental.†

---

\* Among Mr. Lincoln's ambassadors, no one appears to more advantage in this volume than Mr. James E. Harvey, who attends to his duties quietly, and writes tolerably good English. We note in one instance, a rather plaintive allusion to the trouble he encountered on the threshold of his functions, when he was defamed and threatened with sharp penalties, for doing the bidding of his superiors.

† So far as Mr. Buchanan's administration was affected by Mr. Seward's assertion, that Southern or pro-slavery men were sent as Ministers abroad, it is simply untrue. Of the twelve leading European Missions, seven were filled by gentlemen from the Northern States, four from the border States, and but one (Russia) by an extreme Southern man, and he (Mr. Pickens, of South Carolina) was succeeded by Mr. Appleton, of Maine.

Having so delegated these trusts, Mr. Seward set himself at work to instruct his agents in their peculiar work, and the first division of this volume of despatches, in character, if not in order of time, comprises those instructions—such, we mean, as, either prepared before the fall of Sumter, or afterwards, have relation to other topics than the disruption of the Union.

Mr. Seward has often said, in season and out of season, that negro slavery is the canker of our institutions. He and his school have so irritated, and worried, and inflamed the sore, that so far as they could, they have made it a terrible and wasting affliction. It was hardly to be expected, therefore, that when he became, in his own estimation, at least, the nation's "Premier," and exponent of the views and policy of the Federal Government, he should retract the opinions of a tolerably long life, however offensive, on this one topic, or shun the opportunity, from a new pulpit, to preach them to what he hoped to be the admiring and sympathetic congregation of the civilized world. Accordingly, we find in these despatches, not a few specimens of abolition propagandism, though it is fair to say, not as many as we looked for from the antecedents of the writer, and that he very soon dropped the subject, on finding that foreign statesmen had no inclination to trouble themselves about it, and could not be seduced into sentimentalism on the subject of the African, at a time when they had other things, practically, to deal with. It is curious to observe how little encouragement Mr. Seward received on this thesis. In his instructions to Mr. Adams and Mr. Judd, the only ones written before the fall of Sumter, he says nothing about slavery, but on the 22d of April, it breaks forth in a formal despatch to Mr. Dayton, in Paris, and the whole topic of slavery in the Territories, and the influence of slavery in the Government, is discussed either for the enlightenment of a gentleman, once a Senator and to be supposed familiar with our elementary history, or for that of the Imperial Government, to

which he was accredited. One is really at a loss to imagine to what end this inappropriate tirade was printed ; but it is due, as well to the distinguished and discreet gentleman who represents us at Paris, as to the Imperial Foreign Minister, to say that neither took the slightest notice of the Secretary's anti-slavery homily, or ever encouraged or permitted the subject to be alluded to or discussed between them. The whole bearing of Mr. Dayton on this, and, as will be seen, on another subject, was that of an American gentleman, who shrank from the humiliation of exhibiting our lazar sores (as Mr. Seward, if he is consistent, think them) to the Courts of Europe.\*

But the Secretary had instruments elsewhere, suited to his purpose. They were Mr. Cassius Clay in Russia, Mr. Fogg and Mr. Fay in Switzerland, Mr. Pike at the Hague, and, we regret to say, Mr. Marsh at Turin. The only two Europeans who seem to have referred to American slavery were the Emperor of Russia, if we understand Mr. Clay's grotesque report, and the Baron Ricasoli, the Italian or Sardinian Prime Minister, who told our Minister that he hoped the authority of the Union would be re-established, on terms which would secure the triumph of the principles of freedom, and "the ultimate extinction of human slavery." It was in communicating this that Mr. Marsh, true to his New England origin, said to the Secretary :

"The favorable sentiments with which the present administration of the Federal Government is regarded by most continental statesmen, are founded, (independently of the high personal regard felt for the President and his constitutional advisers) partly on the opinion that he is sustaining the

---

\* "If humiliation is the element in which we live, if it is become not only our occasional policy, but our habit, no great objection can be made to the modes in which it may be diversified ; though, I confess, I cannot be charmed with the idea of our exposing our lazar sores where the court dogs will not deign to lick them."—*Letter on a Regicide Peace*, p. 361.

cause of constitutional authority, of the entirety of nationalities, and of established order against causeless rebellion, violent disruption of a commonwealth essentially a unit, and disorganizing and lawless misrule; but still more I think, on the belief that the struggle in which it was involved is virtually a contest between the propagandists of domestic slavery and *the advocates of emancipation and universal freedom*. If the civil war be protracted, I am convinced that our hold upon the sympathy and good will of the Governments, and still more of the people of Europe, will depend upon the distinctness with which this issue is kept before them; and if it were now proposed by the Federal Government to purchase the submission of the South, by any concession to their demands on this subject, or by assuming any attitude but that of, at least, moral hostility to slavery, I have no doubt that the dissolution of the Union would be both desired and promoted by a vast majority of those who now hope for its perpetuation."

In Switzerland and Holland, the attempt to intrude abolition signally failed. It was to Switzerland that Mr. Seward addressed some of the highest strains of his exaggerated rhetoric. "Human nature," says he, writing to Minister Fogg, "must lose not only the faculty of reason, which lifts it above the inferior beings, but also the benevolence which lifts it up to commune with superior orders of existence, when the security, welfare and happiness of the United States shall have become a matter of indifference to Italy or Switzerland. I salute Switzerland last among the European nations, only because we esteem and confide in her the most." And then, in a more subdued and practical tone, he hints to the Minister, whom we take to be an author, how, in the leisure of his Alpine seclusion, he may profitably occupy his time. "We very much want a good history of the Swiss Confederacy, since its reformation, especially showing how faction developes itself there, and how the Government works in preventing or suppressing

designs subversive of the federal unity of the republic. The President hopes you will furnish it, as he knows your ability for such a task." Thus instructed, Mr. Fogg reached Berne, finding there Mr. Theodore Fay, a gentleman who had been long abroad as a representative of Democratic administrations, and who seems disposed to retain official functions if it can be done by propitiating a different school of politics.

"My resignation," said Mr. Fay, in his address to the President of the Confederation, "has not resulted from difference of opinion with the President of the United States. Our country is now occupied in a struggle with an institution as unmanageable as the hydra of Hercules. It is not my wish to misrepresent the proprietors of slaves. Many of them are sincere, Christian gentlemen. But the institution, in its present form, is irreconcilable with our national existence, with the religious sentiment of the majority, and with the Word of God. Nothing can be clearer than the right and duty of the American people to protect themselves from its uncontrolled development, and from being drawn downwards in their career of political and religious civilization. Man should not live by bread alone, nor by cotton alone!"

After Mr. Fogg had added something in the same strain, President Knuesel replied with dignity and precision, reciprocating the kind feeling of the outgoing and incoming Ministers, and their Government, but remaining resolutely silent on the domestic grievance so inappropriately introduced. A sharp critic might detect in the President's language ideas with reference to Confederate States, which have more the ring of Richmond than of Washington. "Switzerland," said the President, "from the sincere sympathy which she has for the welfare of the Union, looks with anxiety upon the issue of events which now shake this country. Switzerland passed through a similar crisis, fourteen years ago, which threatened to tear asunder the then loose connexion of the twenty-two cantons. But renewed

rose the present Confederation from that tempest ; strengthened internally and abroad, she now stands there esteemed by the nations. May God grant that the connexion of *the States* of the United States of America may also emerge, renewed and strengthened, out of this crisis.”\*

But it was in Holland that the anti-slavery agitation was most boldly attempted, and most signally failed. Nowhere could it have been more inappropriate, the Netherlands having colonies, in the West if not in the East, where slavery in a modified form yet exists, and is likely to continue, notwithstanding a promise to abolish it two years hence. At the Hague, the United States was represented, during Mr. Buchanan’s Administration, by a gentleman whom this correspondence shows to be a man of sense and discretion, and whose conduct seems to have extorted expressions of confidence from those who certainly show no good will to any one whom the late President trusted or appointed. He honestly tells the truth, however unpalatable, and, looking at what was the state of things in May, and now, one is startled at what was said of the inclination and prescience of the Dutch Government.

“It is not to be disguised,” writes Mr. Murphy, on the 27th of May, 1861, “that public sentiment here is much more favorable to the seceding States than it has been. The message of Mr. Davis, recently delivered to the Congress of those States, has been extensively published here, in substance, not at full length, and has had much influence on the question, from the specious ground of the

---

\* Mr. Fay’s abolitionism seems to have won Mr. Fogg’s heart. He writes to the Secretary, on the 8th of July, 1861 : “Thoroughly sympathising with the principles and purposes of the present Administration of the United States Government, and possessing large experience and an enviable reputation in Europe, I trust it may not be deemed impertinent in me to express the hope that the State Department will not be a long time in finding some field where his familiarity with international and diplomatic affairs will be a necessity to the Government.”

Union being a mere confederation of independent States. Besides, Holland, or the Netherlands, has had a bitter lesson of experience, under similar circumstances. The rebellion of Belgium, in 1830, was resisted with all the power of this Government, which would probably have succeeded in crushing it, if England and France had not interfered, and the immense public debt with which this country is oppressed, was then mostly incurred, while Belgium was, notwithstanding, lost. Reasoning from this point of view, there are not a few who regard the present position of the United States an expensive and useless effort."

Mr. James S. Pike, of the staff, we believe, of the New York Tribune, succeeded Mr. Murphy, and in his first official interview, informed the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, "that the rebellion in America was merely a war in behalf of African slavery, and that if we had no slavery, we should have no war and no rebellion. The Union of the States can be maintained whenever the Government sees fit to render the institutions of the several States homogeneous; for when they were once made free States, there would be no wish to separate and no tendency to separation." No answer of sympathy being made to this, on the 11th of September, Mr. Pike addressed an elaborate communication to the Dutch Government, on the subject of the visit of the Sumter at Curacao, from which we quote a passage of acrid, and, as the result shows, most unwelcome dogmatism.

"By doing so," (conceding belligerent rights to the Confederate States,) "this Government may make an enemy of the United States, through the consequences growing out of that act. But Holland will not thereby make a friend of the rash and misguided men, who lead the rebellion against the American Government. For their object is to extend and perpetuate African slavery. With this object, Holland can have no sympathy. Your Government has just now

determined to abolish that remnant of barbarism in your colonial possessions." "The slave-holders' rebellion cannot be successful. The United States has determined it shall not be, and it will preserve the Union of States at whatever cost. But even if we admit, for argument's sake, that some of the slave-holding States should be allowed hereafter to depart from the Union, still would the rebellion be unsuccessful in its objects, and hospitality (*sic*) shown to its progress be unavailing. The United States would still be resolute to defeat the purposes of the rebel slave-holder. They would do this by their own unaided efforts. They might readily co-operate with foreign powers to the same end. Such of those powers as hold possessions in America, wherein slavery has been abolished would join in this object from motives of justice and humanity, as well as from considerations of policy and consistency. \* \* A common civilization throughout the world will look with favor on a common Union to crush the offensive purposes of the rebellious slave-holder. His success, therefore, is out of the question. Unless the world is to go backward, and history reverses its lessons, this rebellion in its leading purpose, is foredoomed. Even Governments cannot save that against which humanity revolts. Surrounded by communities on the North, on the South, on the West, that have expelled slavery; the islands of the Carribean Sea, nearly all emancipated from this pestilent system; the fabric of the rebellious slave-holder, which he is so madly ambitious to erect, were even its temporary establishment possible, would soon *be washed away by the attrition of surrounding influence upon its crumbling foundations, and its remains left a ruin in the world.* It is thus neither just nor politic in any point of view, for the powers of Europe to do any thing to encourage this abortive and criminal enterprise of the rebellious American enterprise."

A diplomatic correspondence thus begun could end in no good, and an examination of this part of the volume will



show the reader that it resulted in a failure to extort the practical redress which was sought in the case of the Confederate privateer, and exposed our representative to a rebuke, not the less severe because it was administered with dignified moderation.

"It is needless," says Baron Van Zuylen to Mr. Pike, on the 15th of October, 1861, "to add that the Cabinet of the Hague will not depart from the principles mentioned at the close of my reply of the 17th September, of which you demand the application; it does know and will know how to act in conformity with the obligations of impartiality and of neutrality, without losing sight of the care for its own dignity.

"Called by the confidence of the King to maintain that dignity, to defend the rights of the crown, and to direct the relations of the state with foreign powers, I know not how to conceal from you, sir, that certain expressions in your communications above mentioned, have caused an unpleasant impresssion on the King's Government, and do not appear to me to correspond with the manner in which I have striven to treat the question now under discussion, or with the desire which actuates the Government of the Netherlands to seek for a solution perfectly in harmony with its sentiments of friendship towards the United States, and with the observance of treaties.

"The feeling of distrust which seems to have dictated your last despatch of the 18th of this month, and which shows itself especially in some entirely erroneous appreciations of the conduct of the Government of the Netherlands, gives to the last, strong in its good faith and in its friendly intentions, good cause for astonishment. So, then, the Cabinet, of which I have the honor to form part, deems that it may dispense with undertaking a justification, useless to all who examine impartially and without passion, the events which have taken place."

Such seems to have been the failure of Mr. Seward's

diplomacy in the minor courts of the Old World, and we now turn with deeper interest to the illustration of what he has done, or tried or failed to do, in his relation to the two great Powers of Western Europe, on whose mere will, at the moment these words are written, depend the great issues of war or peace.

We desire to consider these without reference to the Trent complication, though, for the full comprehension of the stupendous folly, the worse than blindness to sure realities, of publishing these papers, it must be borne in mind that the news of Captain Wilkes' feat reached this country on the 16th November; that Mr. Seward's precautionary letter about it, to Mr. Adams, was written on the 30th; and that these papers were not communicated to Congress till the 3d of December, the date of the President's message. They were therefore deliberately published to the world after the news of the new difficulty had reached Washington. Mr. Seward desires the British Government to look at the Trent affair (serious enough, one would think, by itself,) in the light shed by these disclosures. It may at least be said that they do not invigorate friendly feeling. There is a whistling sort of defiance in this publication, which is very characteristic.

There are, in our poor opinion, two delusions under which the Secretary of State entered upon the duties of his high office, and of which he has probably never rid himself. If not delusions, they are ignorances. One is a belief that Great Britain and France, especially the former, are animated by secret hostility to us, and a desire to see this Union fall in ruins. The other, an absolute unconsciousness of the close relation actually subsisting, socially, economically and politically, between the two countries, and a self-complacent notion that, by some dexterous diplomacy — some smart device — some adroit appeal to ancient animosity — this close relation can be severed.

That we may not do injustice, let us quote Mr. Seward's well considered words. On the 15th of May he addressed a despatch to the Minister in Switzerland, from which we have already made an extract, in which he said: "I can easily imagine that either Great Britain, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia, Belgium, Spain, or even Denmark, might even imagine that it could acquire some advantage, or at least some satisfaction to itself, from a change that should abridge the dominion, the commerce, the prosperity or influence of the United States, each of them might be supposed to have *envious sentiments towards us, which would delight in an opportunity to do us harm.*" The *italics* are our own, but whether read with or without emphasis, the words show the predominant thought of the writer, and it requires a very slight collation of other portions of this volume to prove that the suspicion is intensified in relation to Great Britain, and hangs like a cloud over the darkened intelligence of the Secretary, from first to last.

Now we do not hesitate to say, drawing our convictions from large and varied intercourse and correspondence with individuals of different classes, pursuits and political opinions, that never was there greater injustice, or a more vulgar prejudice, than to attribute hostile feeling or hostile action to English statesmen during the anxious months that elapsed from the fall of Sumter to the capture of the Trent. We do not overrate the friendliness. We simply deny, and cannot see the evidence of the hostility. An eminent British statesman, half a century ago, said that romantic sentiment among nations was impracticable, and we do not, in attributing to Great Britain a friendly sympathy with our sorrows, mean to exaggerate a sentiment.\* It is the simple truth, according to the light and experience the writer of these pages has, that every public man in England, of high intelligence, whether he be a Bright man, or a

---

\* Lord Grey's speech on Spanish Affairs in 1810.

Derbyite, or a Whig, or a friend of Lord Palmerston, whatever may be his abstract satisfaction at the failure of a theory of government, looks upon the downfall of the Federal Union, as it used to be, with its constitutional restraints and integrity, with sorrow, and upon the bloody civil war with horror. The "*projeice tela manu, sanguis meus*" of Lord Chatham was on the lips of all who spoke.\* No pen wrote other words than those of sorrow. That this sympathy and kind feeling have been chilled from time to time, is true enough. That England and Englishmen saw with wonder at least six of the seven institutions of civil liberty which, according to Mr. Sumner's last speech, England gave to us, trampled under foot—personal liberty, judicial authority, freedom of the press—given up without a murmur.† That she hears with wonder eminent jurists, on a question of *Habeas Corpus*, renounce English analogy; that she sees in the North, where the Federal Constitution is claimed to exist, men arbitrarily imprisoned and coolly discharged, and the spirit of the victim so crushed and impoverished that it fears to seek redress; that England and Englishmen see all this with affection and confidence abated, is certainly and lamentably true, but it was not so when Mr. Lincoln became President last March, and Mr. Seward began despatch-writing. In spite of all, the kind

---

\* Lord Chatham's speech, January 20, 1775.

† On the 8th of June, 1861, Mr. Seward wrote to Mr. Adams, "We honor and respect the freedom of debate and the freedom of the press. We indulge no apprehensions of danger to our rights or interests from any discussion to which they may be subjected in either form, or any place!" And to Mr. Schurz, he said, "The Spanish government knows that the several States which constitute the Federal Union can respectively practice tyranny or oppression upon individual citizens, and may even hinder and embarrass the General Government, while, on the other hand, that Government being armed with only a few though very important, powers, needful for preserving domestic peace and defence against foreign nations, can neither oppress, nor impoverish, nor annoy any member of the Union, or *any private citizen*!"

feeling still exists, and no one can (passing by inflammatory editorials, very much the same all over the world,) read a newspaper now without admitting it. The sorrow for the heavy personal bereavement, as the death of the Queen's husband seems to be, which the British nation feels, is modified and shared by the regret at the possibility of another fraternal war between them and us. Within a month there has been spoken in the Abbey Church of Westminster, by the tongue of a gentle and accomplished Christian minister—a master of the pure English language, which we cannot, if we would, renounce—words on which the eye has just lighted, and which are reproduced here, to illustrate what we are trying to say. It is sorrowing, sorely afflicted, not, according to Mr. Sumner, “penitent England” that speaks in the voice of one of her gentlest, purest sons :

“A little month ago, we might have had our passing inquietudes, such as at our best state we can never be actually without, but in the main, all appeared well with us. We looked down, with too little sympathy, perhaps, on the nations around us; we saw the cup of pain and tribulation as it passed from the lips of one to those of another, and almost deemed it was never destined for our own. We compared, with perhaps, too much pride and complacency, our lot with them. So fortunate at home, so fortunate abroad, we said: ‘Peace and safety are ours: to-morrow will be as to-day, or its prosperity more abundant!’ But lo! in a moment the huge black wings of the tempest had stretched across our whole horizon, shrouding it with thickest darkness, and Christmas, on the eve of which we stood, seemed almost to mock us with its untimely mirth, so painfully did it contrast with all the sorrow and sadness in our hearts. One great sorrow has already overtaken us, and there is another, perhaps, travelling up behind, the tidings of which may now be on their way to us—but in God’s mercy, may that threatening evil, an unnatural and

fraternal war, a war between the children of the same mother, be averted."\*

But Mr. Seward does not believe one word of this. Hostility to England was the staple of his poor joke to the Duke of Newcastle, at a dinner table. It is the animating spirit of these unfortunate despatches, in which, from the Cabinet at Washington, he instructed Mr. Adams and Mr. Dayton how they were to comport themselves towards those hostile powers of England and France. The fruits of the experiment we have in the attitude they now hold.

From the 9th of March, when he addressed his circular to our Ministers abroad, to the date of his despatch to Lord Lyons, surrendering Messrs. Slidell and Mason, "at such time and place as his Lordship should indicate," was an interval of ten months. Excluding that incidental matter, Mr. Seward had eight months for his diplomatic efforts. Let us see what those efforts were, and what fruits they have borne.

There were two, and but two objects to be attained.

One was, to prevent even the indirect recognition of the seceded States.

The other, to effect a complete prohibition of privateering, by obtaining permission for the United States to become parties to the agreement of the Congress at Paris.

Mr. Seward has lamentably failed in both.

Let us reverse the order in which we have enumerated these objects, and consider the privateering *fiasco* first.

\* Dean Trench's sermon on the death of Prince Albert, 22d December, 1861. In the life of Sir Charles Napier, occurs a passage of touching interest, now when the hand of brother is raised against brother, showing how his soldier's heart revolted from the bloody work. He had a command in Virginia in 1812, at the very spot where was Hampton and is Great Bethel. He writes in his diary: "I would rather see two Frenchmen shot than one American. It is quite shocking to have men who speak our own language brought in wounded; one feels as if they were English peasants and that we are killing our own people." Vol. I, p. 224.

This great change in the settled belligerent policy of the nation, it will be recollected, was first brought to the attention of the country by President Pierce, in his Annual Message of 1856. The attempted negotiation on this and kindred subjects of general maritime law, between Mr. Marcy and Count Sartiges, when it occurred six years ago, was deemed of sufficient importance to be mentioned in a President's Message. Its failure was no reason for omitting it, and Mr. Pierce explained at length, what had been done and attempted. Not so Mr. Lincoln: Neither in his Message of July, nor in that of December, do we find an explanatory word—indeed, only a singular, meagre, and not very intelligible sentence, from which one would hardly infer that during the short recess of Congress, if not during the extra session, an elaborate attempt had been made to ameliorate the whole code of sea law, with an offer to surrender unconditionally a part of the war-making power recognized in the Constitution, and that it had failed. Yet, such these papers show to be the fact.\*

Its story may be briefly told.

Let it be remembered, as we have said, that among the powers conferred on Congress by the Constitution, is that of "declaring war and issuing letters of marque and reprisal." We are not aware that a question has ever been suggested, how far such a power of Congress could be perpetually renounced by a treaty, but we are content to admit it might be. But we do not doubt that the surrender of this great weapon of war, is of more than doubtful ex-

---

\* "Some treaties, designed chiefly for the interests of commerce, and having no grave political importance, have been negotiated, and will be submitted to the Senate for their consideration. Although we have failed to induce some of the commercial powers to adopt a desired melioration of maritime war, we have removed all obstructions in the way of this humane reform, except such as are of merely temporary and accidental occurrence." President Lincoln's Message of December 3, 1861.

pediency—ought never to be thought of, unless accompanied by a complete abnegation of the capture of private property on the ocean, and its exemption from blockade restrictions—and never was thought of and never would have been suggested by Mr. Lincoln's Government, but for the pressure of Southern privateering. When, in 1856, the French Government asked Mr. Marey's adhesion to the new doctrine, we all remember the language, so unlike Mr. Seward's, in which the reply was expressed. It was a frank, earnest decision.

"The policy of the law," said Mr. Marey, "which allows a resort to privateers, has been questioned, for reasons which do not command the assent of this government. Without entering into a full discussion on this point, the undersigned will confront the ordinary and chief objection to that policy, by authority which will be regarded with profound respect, particularly in France, for it is Valin who says, 'However lawful and time-honored this mode of warfare may be, it is, nevertheless, disapproved of by some pretended philosophers. According to their notions, such is not the way in which the state and sovereign are to be served; whilst the profits which individuals may derive from the pursuits are illicit, or at least disgraceful. But this is the language of bad citizens, who, under the stately mask of spurious wisdom and of a craftily sensitive conscience, seek to mislead the judgment by a concealment of the surer motive which gives birth to their indifference for the warfare and advantage of the state. Such are as worthy of blame as are those entitled to praise who generously expose their property and their lives to the dangers of privateering.' "

This was the accepted doctrine of the United States, and so Mr. Seward thought when he took office; for, in the instructions to Mr. Adams, dated on April 10th, he tells him the only open questions with Great Britain relate to Puget Sound and the Hudson Bay Company, which are to be discussed at Washington; and that all he will have to



do will be to watch the machinations of the "Rebel" emissaries, and to see that Lord Russel does not become a victim to their blandishments. On the 13th Fort Sumter fell. On the 19th the *Star of the West* was captured, to become, as was supposed, the nucleus of a privateer navy that might sweep the seas; and on the 24th Mr. Seward issued his circular to all the leading courts of Europe, agreeing to abolish privateering absolutely, from motives of "benevolence and faith in human progress!" Nay, so anxious was he that he actually sent the draught of a convention to that effect. The despatch thus closes, and we beg the reader to note the very faint manner in which the wish for the Marcy amendment is expressed, and the singular reason given for not pressing it, — that Europe is on the verge of general wars, or, as Mr. Seward expresses it, "quite general wars." The language is this :

"For your own information, it will be sufficient to say, that the President adheres to the opinion expressed by my predecessor, Mr. Marcy, that it would be eminently desirable for the good of all nations that the property and effects of private individuals, not contraband, should be exempt from seizure and confiscation by national vessels in maritime war. If the time and circumstances were propitious to a prosecution of the negociation, with that object in view he would direct that it should be assiduously pursued. But the right season seems to have passed, at least for the present. Europe seems once more on the verge of quite general wars. On the other hand, a portion of the American people have raised the standard of insurrection, and proclaimed a provisional government, and, through their organs, have taken the bad resolution to invite privateers to prey upon the peaceful commerce of the United States. Prudence and humanity combine in persuading the President, under the circumstances, that it is wise to secure the lesser good offered by the Paris Congress, without waiting indefinitely, in hope to obtain the greater one, offered

to the maritime nations by the President of the United States."

The instruction thus given in a panic, not, we admit, unreasonable, to accept the Paris proposition, pure and simple, and renounce our cherished maritime means of war, was so received by Mr. Adams, who, in the intervals allowed him from the anxious custody of intercepted despatch bags, applied himself to carrying it into effect. Not so Mr. Dayton; and here, studying these papers with an anxious desire to weigh evidence and to ascertain truth, we admit a grievous perplexity on discovering that Mr. Dayton, though apparently without other instructions than Mr. Adams, pursued a widely different course, insisting on the Marcy amendment to the last, and never giving it up till he was ordered to do so from Washington; and thus we have the strange exhibition of an utter want of accord in our two ministers, though each is accredited to a leading party to the Congress of Paris, and who were only separated by a day's journey and a few seconds of telegraphing. One need not wonder at the failure of diplomacy thus directed or thus conducted.

Of it, there is but one of two solutions: either that there were instructions given to Mr. Dayton different from Mr. Adams', which are not published, having for their aim the fruition of some ambi-dextrous policy of separating France from England; or, what is far more probable, that Mr. Dayton, an able and earnest man, well educated in the political history of his country, felt and acted under an honest conviction that the Marcy amendment ought not to be given up without effort; and that, looking to the rugged horizon and dark clouds around him, the chances, not of general wars of Europe, but the possible conflict between us and it, he could not bear to give up our natural, constitutional weapon of offence and defence, without a struggle for some compensation. While this theory does not make the technical diplomacy better, or at all relieve the administration from its panic-stricken and ineffectual concession, it very much elevates Mr. Dayton as a patriot and statesman. Let

us briefly trace this part of the record, begging it to be understood our criticisms are only on what we have before us, not on what we may imagine to be withheld.

Late in May, Mr. Dayton broached the subject to the French government, and urged the Marcy amendment, on account, he says, of his sense of "the great importance of securing the principle, before the United States should give up the right of privateering, and the repeated willingness of the continental governments to agree to it." A few weeks later he is startled by reading in the New York newspapers that the government had permitted it to be known that the amendment would not be insisted on. "I fear," says he, writing to Mr. Seward, "this will prevent all chance of better terms." On the 31st of May Mr. Dayton formally proposed the amendment to M. Thouvenal. The answer to this is not given, though we infer it to have been, that the proposition should have been addressed, not to France alone, but to all the powers; and on the same day Mr. Dayton more clearly stated his scruples to the department at home.

"Our condition, as respects privateering and the belligerent rights conceded to the South, has been so changed by the action of Great Britain, France, and Spain, subsequent to the first declaration of Lord John Russel, (stating that such belligerent rights would be conceded,) that I know not what may be the views of the Government of the United States at this time, as respects an accession to the treaty of 1856, pure and simple. But, as I have learned that nothing substantially has been done in that direction at other points, and I do not see that the interests of the country will be jeopardized by a little delay, I shall await further instructions upon this subject. My first despatch, referring to this matter, was dated 22d of May last, and I doubt not I shall now receive an answer at an early day. If the Government of the United States shall, in view of the circumstances, direct me to make the proposition to the French Govern-

ment to accede to the Paris treaty, pure and simple, I will, acting under such express direction, lose no time in making the proposition."

At a later date (July 5th) he was still more explicit, and stated his views of the whole affair in words not to be misunderstood.

"It is due to frankness to say, that if a convention is to be negotiated for an accession by the United States to the Treaty of Paris, without amendment to the first clause, I would prefer it should be done at Washington, rather than Paris. Still, I hold myself subject to the orders of the Government, in this, as in other matters. I have already said I should await further instructions from your department on this subject."

There were then on their way to him, two despatches, from Mr. Seward of great import, and which were designed to give him the "express direction" he needed. On the 15th of June, Mr. Mercier and Lord Lyons had called on the Secretary with a joint communication as to a modified recognition of the Confederates as belligerents, which, as is well known, Mr. Seward refused to listen to; and, on the 17th, he wrote to Mr. Dayton, claiming vast credit for having long before agreed to become a party to the Paris compact. "While," said he, "willing and desirous to have that further principle (the Marcy amendment) incorporated in the law of nations, we, nevertheless, instructed you and all our representatives to waive it, *if necessary*, and to stipulate, subject to the concurrence of the Senate, our adhesion to the declaration of Paris, as a whole and unmodified. We have ever since been waiting for the responses of foreign powers to this high and liberal demonstration on our part." It is perfectly clear that the "if necessary" of the despatch was an afterthought; for no such word is to be found in the instructions, and all the while Mr. Adams had never dreamed he was to make such an experiment, and never did make it.

On the 6th of July, there is a despatch to Mr. Dayton,

which may be described as almost petulant, and from which we make a few extracts, sufficiently indicative of this spirit. The *italics* are ours.

"The instructions dated April 24. *required you* to tender to the French Government, *without delay*, our adhesion to the declaration of the Congress of Paris, pure and simple."

"They waived," he says again in the same despatch, "the Marcy amendment, and required you to propose our accession to the declaration of the Congress." "The matter stood in this plain and intelligible way, until certain declarations or expressions of the French Government induced you to believe that they would recognize and treat the insurgents as a distinct national power for belligerent purposes. It was not altogether unreasonable that you, being at Paris, should suppose that this Government would think itself obliged to acquiesce in such a course by the Government of France." "The case was peculiar, and in the aspect in which it presented itself to you, portentous. We were content that you might risk the experiment, so, however, that you should not bring any responsibility for delay upon this Government. But you now see you have encountered the very difficulty which was at first foreseen by us. *It is no time for propagandism*, but for energetic acting to arrest the worst of all national calamities. *We, therefore, expect you now to renew the proposition in the form originally presented.*"

Early in August, Mr. Dayton received these peremptory orders. There was no alternative but to obey. He thus announced to the Secretary his reluctant acquiescence:

"By my note to Mr. Adams, written in London, you will find your instructions were anticipated by my action; that immediately upon learning *from a reliable source*, what were the views of the Government in regard to an accession to the Treaty of Paris, expressed with full knowledge of facts occurring since its original instructions to me, I at once took measures to comply with them, without attempting to

balance the suggestions of my own mind against its known wishes. But I confess, in a matter of such grave importance as an accession by the United States to that treaty, I did want those wishes expressed with full knowledge of the facts." (*Mr. Dayton to Mr Seward, 2d August, 1861.*)

The proposition "pure and simple," thus dictated, was then made, but failed in consequence, as it seems, of the English and French Governments desiring to incorporate in the Convention, a stipulation that it was to have no bearing directly or indirectly on the question of our Southern and domestic difficulty. Mr. Dayton, glad no doubt to be relieved from the embarrassment in which he found himself, rejected this promptly, without waiting for instructions, and Mr. Adams, between whom and Earl Russell, had arisen rather a delicate question of memory as to facts, followed the example, and thus broke down, like everything else, this diplomatic enterprise; and by no merit of his, Mr. Seward's administration still holds in its hand the only weapon which a thorough blockade of our large sea-ports would leave us in the too probable event of a war with the great maritime powers of Europe.

Whether the English and French Governments were justified in wishing to interpolate this limitation on the new code is a question rather for them than for us. Their reasons were thus, precisely, and one would think inoffensively given by M. Thouvenal to Mr. Dayton.

"He said that both France and Great Britain had already announced that they would take no part in our domestic controversy, and they thought that a frank and open declaration in advance of the execution of this convention might save difficulty and misconception hereafter. He further said, in the way of specification, that the provisions of the Treaty standing alone, might bind England and France to pursue and punish the privateers of the South as pirates; that they were unwilling to do this, and had already so declared. He said that we could deal with these people as

we chose, and they could only express their regret on the score of humanity, if we should deal with them as pirates, but they could not participate in such a course. He said further, that although both England and France were anxious to have the adhesion of the United States to the declaration of Paris, that they would rather dispense with it altogether, than be drawn into our domestic controversy. He insisted, somewhat pointedly, that I could take no just exception to this outside declaration, simultaneous with the execution of the Convention, unless we intended they should be made parties to our controversy; and that the very fact of my hesitation was an additional reason why they should insist upon making such contemporaneous declaration."

And we confess the precaution was not unreasonable, for turning to Mr. Seward's elaborate despatch of the 6th of July, we find that in tendering this accession to the agreement to abolish privateering as the act of the Federal Government, it was meant to make it "obligatory equally upon disloyal as loyal citizens;" or, in other words, to frame it so as to enable us to call upon France and England to aid in pursuing and punishing the privateers of the South as pirates, which, for the sake of humanity, they were determined not to do. In all this there is certainly no laurel leaf for the Secretary's brow.

We have not allowed ourselves time to follow closely the line of Mr. Seward's policy on the graver question of the recognition or quasi-recognition of the Confederates as belligerents. It is to our mind a sad record. We can afford room only for a few specimens of what has been said and written. They fully sustain the opinion we have formed, and show how natural it is that, at the end of ten months of restless and laborious rhetoric it is more a question than ever, what the leading powers of Europe mean to do in this crisis of our destiny; the chances being rather against us.

Mr. Seward began his course of instruction under manifest prejudice and no little self-deception. He had not a doubt the insurrection would be over in a month or two. He imagined that the public mind of Europe had been poisoned by the machinations of the past, and it was in the power of his magic pen to conjure down the evil spirit. Now the truth is, there was not the slightest colour for all this; for, though in his first despatch to Mr. Adams, speaking of the late Administration, he says, that "disaffection lurked, if it did not avow itself, in every department and every bureau, in every regiment and in every ship of war, in the Post Office and in the Custom House, and in every legation and consulate, from London to Calcutta," these very papers show that, in a majority of Mr. Buchanan's ministers abroad, his successor found fidelity, ability, zeal, and what in the new phrase of the day is known as exuberant "loyalty."\* This was especially the case, and so admitted to be, at London, St. Petersburg, Holland, Prussia, Austria, Switzerland, and Rome,—Mr. Seward retracts the aspersion in particular cases, but allows the general libel to stand and to be published to the world. This may be the solution of the morbid temper in which, in times requiring great coolness and magnanimity, he began his administrative career. The only possible exceptions to what we have said are the cases of Mr. Faulkner at Paris, and Mr. Preston in Spain; and yet to these gentlemen, whatever may have been their conduct or their sufferings since, these documents show great injustice has been done. As for back as the 19th of March, Mr. Faulkner wrote to the department as intelligent and "loyal" a despatch as its archives can boast of, in which he narrated his earnest protest "against the recognition of the seceded

---

\* As to the disaffection in the departments on Mr. Lincoln's accession, it is a question to be discussed by Mr. Seward with the present Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, once Mr. Buchanan's Attorney-General; Mr. Holt, his War Minister; and Major General Dix, his Secretary of the Treasury.



States as irreconcilable with any principle of international law or courtesy, or consideration of public benefit ;” but he added, and this, we presume, was his offence : “ You have not, in your despatch, informed me what line of policy it is the purpose of the Federal government to adopt towards the seceding States, a fact most material in determining my own action, as well as the views to be addressed to a foreign power on the points presented by your instructions. If I correctly construe the intentions of the Government, it looks to a pacific solution of the difficulties which now disturb its relations with the seceding States. In other words, it does not propose to resort to the strong arm of military power to coerce those States into submission to the Federal authority. If this be a correct view of its proposed action, and all who understand the genius of our institutions and the character of our people, must hope that it shall be such, the only difficulty will be in making European governments appreciate the spirit of such wise and conciliatory policy, and comprehend the just application of the principles of international jurisprudence to a state of facts so novel and peculiar,” with the Emperor’s remark, that “ He did not misapprehend the spirit of conciliation which now actuates the conduct of the Federal authorities. He knows that appeals to the public judgment perform that function in our republic which is elsewhere only accomplished by brute force. And if armies have not been marshalled, as they would have been ere this in Europe, to give effect to the Federal authority, he is aware that it is not because the General Government disclaims authority over the seceding States, or is destitute of the means and resources of war, but from an enlightened conviction on its part that time and reflection will be more efficacious than arms in re-establishing the Federal authority, and restoring that sentiment of loyalty to the Union which was once the pride of every American heart.”

Mr. Preston wrote from Madrid in April : “ An interview

has taken place between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself in reference to the subject embraced in your circular. The minister expressed pain at the posture of affairs in the United States, but said that her Majesty's government was informed that extensive military and naval preparations were making in the North to enforce the Federal supremacy in the South, and that the consequences were to be dreaded. I replied that I felt assured his information was erroneous."

Now, let us see, recorded in this volume and never retracted, what Mr. Seward himself was saying, twenty days after Mr. Faulkner, and twelve days before Mr. Preston uttered their "anti-coercion" heresies.

"The President," he writes to England on April 10, 1861, "neither looks for nor apprehends any actual and permanent dismemberment of the American Union, especially by a line of latitude. He is not disposed to reject a cardinal dogma of the South, namely, that the Federal Government cannot reduce the seceding States to obedience by conquest, even although he were disposed to question that proposition. But, in fact, the President willingly accepts it as true. *Only an imperial or despotic Government could subjugate thoroughly disaffected and insurrectionary members of the State.* This Federal Republican system of ours is, of all forms of government, the very one which is most unfitted for such a labor. Happily, however, this is only an imaginary defect. The system has within itself adequate, peaceful, conservative and recuperative forces. Firmness on the part of the Government, in preserving and maintaining the public institutions and property, and in executing the laws where authority can be exercised *without waging war*, combined with such measures of justice, moderation and forbearance as will disarm reasoning opposition, will be sufficient to secure the public safety until returning reflection, concurring with the fearful experience of social evils, the inevitable fruits of faction, shall bring the recusant members cheer-

fully back into the family, which, after all, must prove their best and happiest, as it undeniably is their natural home. The Constitution of the United States provides for that return, by authorizing Congress, on application to be made by a certain majority of the States, to assemble a *National Convention*, in which the organic law can, if it be needful, be revised so as to remove all obstacles to a re-union, so suitable to the habits of the people, and so eminently conducive to the common safety and welfare. Keeping that remedy steadily in view, the President, on the one hand, will not suffer the Federal authority to fall into abeyance, nor will he, on the other, *aggravate existing evils by attempts at coercion which must assume the form of direct war against any of the revolutionary States.*"

The guns of Fort Moultrie, on the 13th of April, we are bound in candour to presume, awakened the Administration from this dream of peace, frustrated disavowals of coercion and the hope of a National Convention, and Mr. Seward at once transferred his animosities and suspicions, and threats, from Mr. Buchanan's expiring embassies to foreign Governments, and especially, and, as the result shows, most unfortunately, to that power whose friendliness it was most important to conciliate, and which Mr. Seward, as appears by a despatch to his most confidential agent, Mr. Sanford, at Brussels, admitted, "would take the lead in determining European relations to the United States."

Let us briefly retrace the recent past, merely remarking at the outset, that it seems incredible (and this we say in all kindness) that the same pen which traced the letter to Lord Lyons, surrendering Mr. Mason and Mr. Slidell, in December, could have written the blustering despatches of April, and May, and June. Being recently and deliberately published, however, we are bound to believe that the spirit of defiance, as Mr. Cassius Clay says "to old John Bull," is still smouldering in the Secretary's heart, the only incongruity being, what we are loth to believe on mere newspaper report, that

British troops are at this moment passing, by consent, over New England railroads, to reinforce the garrisons of Canada.

There is a character in one of Sheridan's comedies, who, when inditing a challenge to a courteous adversary, proposes to begin with an imprecation. Mr. Seward sets out in his diplomatic correspondence with Great Britain with something kindred to one. He thunders terribly in the index. When the instructions to Mr. Adams were prepared, nothing had reached this country but expressions of kindness and sympathy on the part of Great Britain, and at their very date (April 9th) Mr. Dallas had written that Lord John Russell, in conversation on the subject of recognizing the Confederates, assured him, "with great earnestness, that there was not the slightest disposition to grasp at any advantage which might be supposed to arise from the unpleasant domestic differences in the United States, but, on the contrary, he would be highly gratified if those differences were adjusted, and the Union restored to its former unbroken position." With this, Mr. Dallas, a most amiable man, and one who, from long experience, might be supposed capable of accurately estimating official language, was apparently content, or, at all events, he intimates no distrust. On the next day, (April 10,) it is, that Mr. Seward fulminates his elaborate instructions to Mr. Adams, from which some extracts have been made. Their minatory spirit, however, is traceable in sentences like the following, which bristle at intervals throughout:

"If you," says he, "unhappily find Her Majesty's Government tolerating the application of the so-called seceding States, or wavering about it, you will not leave them to suppose for a moment that they can grant that application, and remain the friends of the United States. You may even assure them promptly in that case, that if they determine to recognize, they may at the same time prepare to enter into alliance with the enemies of this Republic. You

alone will represent your country at London, and you will represent the whole of it there. When you are asked to divide that duty with others, diplomatic relations between the Government of Great Britain and this Government will be suspended, and will remain so, until it shall be seen which of the two is most strongly entrenched in the confidence of their respective nations and of mankind."

And then again comes a sentence, not very intelligible, especially in the part we venture to *italicise*:

"It might be enough to say on that subject, that as the United States and Great Britain are equals in dignity, and *not unequal in astuteness in the science and practice of political economy*, the former have good right to regard only their own convenience and consult their own judgment in framing their revenue laws."\*

The concluding, or rather penultimate sentence, is this:

"The British empire itself is an aggregation of divers communities, which cover a large portion of the earth, and embrace one-fifth of the entire population. Some, at least, of these communities, are held to their places in that system, by bonds as fragile as the obligations of our own Federal Union. The strain will sometime come, which is to try the strength of these bonds, though it will be of a different kind from that which is trying the cords of our confederation. Would it be wise for Her Majesty's Government, on this occasion, to set a dangerous precedent, or provoke retaliation? If Scotland and Ireland are at last reduced to quiet contentment, has Great Britain no dependency, island or province left exposed along the whole circle of her empire,

---

\* The Secretary is fond of the un-English word "astuteness." He tells Mr. Sanford, who seems to be a roving diplomatist, flying from his perch at Brussels, to London, to Paris, to Turin, to Genoa, and to Caprera: "The President willingly expects to rely on your *astuteness* in discovering points of attack, and your practical skill and experience in protecting the interests of the United States."

from Gibraltar through the West Indies and Canada, till it begins again on the Southern extremity of Africa?"\*

With Mr. Dallas' report of Lord John Russell's declaration of sympathy, Mr. Seward was far from being satisfied. Just before answering it, he had received a foolish letter from Governor Hicks, of Maryland, which is part of the history of the times, suggesting Lord Lyons as a mediator between North and South, and had replied tartly, "that no domestic contention whatever, which might arise among the *parties* of this Republic, ought, in any case, to be referred to any foreign arbitrament, least of all, to the arbitrament of an European Monarchy." A bold annunciation which, or at least that part of it, where he specially and scornfully refuses monarchical mediation, he seemed to have forgotten, when, a month later, he assured the French Emperor, that if Foreign intercession was practicable, "so cordial is our regard, and such our confidence in his wisdom and justice,

\* Mr. Lovejoy, in a speech in the House of Representatives, on January 14, 1862, elaborating Mr. Seward's ideas, said:

"I hate the British Government, I here now publicly avow and record that hate, and declare that it shall be unextinguishable. I mean to cherish it while I live, and to bequeath it to my children when I die, and if I am alive when war with England comes, and if I can carry a musket in that war, I will carry it. I have three sons, and I mean to charge them, and do now charge them, that if they shall have at that time reached the years of manhood and strength, they shall enter into that war. I believe there was no need for that surrender, and I believe that the nation would have rather gone to war with Great Britain than have suffered the disgrace of being insulted and being thus unavenged. I have not reached the sublimation of Christianity—that exaltation of Christianity which allows me to be insulted, abused and dishonored. I can bear all that as a Christian, but to say that I do it cheerfully, is more than I can bring myself to. I trust in God that the time is not far distant when we shall have suppressed this rebellion, and be prepared to avenge and wipe out the insult we have received. We will then stir up Ireland, we will appeal to the Chartists of England, we will go to the old French *habitans* of Canada, we will join hands with France and Russia to take away the Eastern possessions of that proud empire, and will take away the crown from that Government before we cease."—*New York Tribune*.

that his mediation would be accepted.”\* Be that as it may, co-incidentally with the Maryland impertinence, came Mr. Dallas’ report of the interview at Downing Street, and at once the Secretary sends hot words across the water :

“Her Britannic Majesty’s Government is at liberty to choose whether it will retain the friendship of this Government by refusing all aid and comfort to its enemies, now in flagrant rebellion against it, as we think the treaties existing between the two countries require, or whether the Government of Her Majesty will take the precarious benefits of a different course.”

We hope not to be misunderstood. There can be no objection in diplomatic or any other kind of discussion, to spirited, and it may be defiant words, but one ought to be sure that the occasion warrants them—that they are never used precipitately—and that once used, they are not in terror withdrawn. The true rule is as old as Solomon, and Shakspeare for the one, tells us :

“Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel ; but, being in,  
Bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee ;”

and the other, as if with reference to the Mr. Seward of April, and the Mr. Seward of December, says :—“Go not forth hastily to strife, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame.” The gentlest judgment we can pass on the Secretary is, that in the prime of his official existence, he was in haste to strife, little thinking of the end thereof.

But the complication soon thickened. In the first fortnight of May, there arrived in London Mr. Seward’s letter of the 27th April, to which we have just referred, the Southern commissioners or emissaries, and last of all, Mr. Adams. Before Mr. Adams came, Mr. Dallas had another interview with the Foreign Secretary, who told him :

---

\* Despatch to Mr. Dayton, May 30, 1861.

"That the three representatives of the Southern Confederacy were here; that he had not seen them, but was not unwilling to do so, *unofficially*; that there existed an understanding between this Government and that of France, which would lead both to take the same course as to recognition, whatever that course might be; and he then referred to the rumor of a meditated blockade of Southern ports, and their discontinuance as ports of entry—topics on which I had heard nothing, and could therefore say nothing."

On the 6th of May there was a discussion in the House of Commons, to which Mr. Adams thus refers:

"The answer given by Lord John Russell, in the proceedings of the 6th of May, will of course have attracted your attention, long before these lines meet your eye. I need not say that it excited general surprise, especially among those most friendly to the Government of the United States. There seems to be not a little precipitation in at once raising the disaffected States up to the level of a belligerent power, before it had developed a single one of the real elements which constitute military efficiency outside of its geographical limits. The case of the Greeks was by no means a parallel case; for the declaration had not been made until such time had intervened as was necessary to prove, by the very words quoted by Lord John Russell from the instructions of the British Government, that the power was sufficient 'to cover the sea with its cruisers.' Whereas, in the present instance, there was no evidence to show, as yet, the existence of a single privateer afloat."\*

---

\* There is, in this despatch, a mysterious intimation, beyond our comprehension. After describing his presentation to the Queen, Mr. Adams says: "Thus an end is put to all the speculations which have been set afloat, touching the probable position of the Minister of the United States at this Court." What is meant by this? Mr. Adams, when he wrote this letter, could not have studied carefully the history of the recognition of Greece by the European Powers. It is on all fours with what is doing now. Mr. Seward is our Reis Effendi, who, to use the language of a writer of that day, (1825,)



When Mr. Adams opens this strange volume he will be amazed to find that twenty days before he so positively said that there was not a Southern privateer afloat, his Secretary of State had, in a formal despatch to Mr. Schurz at Madrid, written :

“The revolutionists have opposed to us an army of invasion, directed against this capital, and *a force of privateers* excited to prey upon commerce, and ultimately, no doubt, on the commerce of the world.”

Mr. Dallas' letter of the 2d of May, with the intelligence that Lord John Russell might possibly receive unofficially the Confederate Commissioners as individuals, just as he would Poles, or Neapolitans, or Hungarians who happened to be in London, produced another vehement despatch, which, Mr. Adams is told, is not to be read to the British Secretary; nor are any of its positions to be “prematurely, unnecessarily, or indiscreetly” made known. “Its spirit is to be your guide.” What that spirit is, the reader may judge from the following extracts:

“As to the recognition of the so-called Southern Confederacy, it is not to be made a subject of technical definition. It is, of course, direct recognition to publish an acknowledgment of the sovereignty and independence of a new power. It is direct recognition to receive its ambassadors, ministers, agents, or commissioners officially. A concession of belligerent rights is liable to be construed as a recognition of them. No one of these proceedings will pass unquestioned by the United States in this case.

“Happily, however, her Britannic Majesty's Government can avoid all these difficulties. It invited us, in 1856, to accede to the declaration of the Congress of Paris, of which

---

“wrote like a man who holds the endeavors of neutral nations in contempt, under the notion that the Greek question would shortly be settled by the decided triumph of the Turkish arms.”

body Great Britain was herself a member, abolishing privateering everywhere, in all cases and forever. You already have our authority to propose to her our accession to that declaration. If she refuse it, it can only be because she is willing to become the patron of privateering when aimed at our devastation."

But the point of the threat,—ending in a specific direction, which to this hour, we believe, has never been carried into effect,—is this:

"The President regrets that Mr. Dallas did not protest against the proposed unofficial intercourse between the British Government and the missionaries of the insurgents. It is due, however, to Mr. Dallas to say that our instructions had been only to you and not to him, and that his loyalty and fidelity, so rare in these times, are appreciated. Intercourse of any kind with the so-called commissioners is liable to be construed as a recognition of the authority which appointed them. Such intercourse would be none the less hurtful to us, for being called unofficial, and it might be even more injurious, because we should have no means of knowing what points might be resolved by it. Moreover, unofficial intercourse is useless and meaningless if it is not expected to ripen into official intercourse and direct recognition. It is left doubtful here whether the proposed unofficial intercourse has yet actually begun. Your own antecedent instructions are deemed explicit enough, and it is hoped that you have not misunderstood them. *You will, in any event, desist from all intercourse whatever, unofficial as well as official, with the British Government, so long as it shall continue intercourse of either kind with the domestic enemies of this country.* When intercourse shall have been arrested for this cause, you will communicate with this department and receive further directions."

This letter appears not to have reached Mr. Adams till the 14th of June; and it would seem that in the interval, with the exception of the Queen's proclamation, and some

other minor interlocutory matters, nothing had occurred to widen the apprehended breach; and the fruit of several interviews at the Foreign Office was, that Mr. Adams, on the 7th of June, reported, with confidence, a considerable amelioration of sentiment towards the United States. Of one of the conferences he says, "that both in manner and matter it was conducted in the most friendly spirit." So, we very much incline to think, it would have continued but for the irrepressible activity, the unceasing despatch writing from this side of the Atlantic. There seemed an incapacity for repose.

Mr. Seward's orders to remonstrate against Lord John Russell's social relations were peremptory; and Mr. Adams, with evident reluctance, obeyed them. He thus describes the performance of this part of his duty, which he well calls the most delicate portion of his task:

"I next approached the most delicate portion of my task. I descanted upon the irritation produced in America by the Queen's proclamation, upon the construction almost universally given to it, as designed to aid the insurgents, by raising them to the rank of a belligerent state, and upon the very decided tone taken by the President in my despatches in case any such design was really entertained. I added that, from my own observation of what has since occurred here, I had not been able to convince myself of the existence of such a design. But it was not to be disguised that the fact of the continued stay of the pseudo-commissioners in this city, and, still more, the knowledge that they had been admitted to more or less interviews with his Lordship, was calculated to excite uneasiness. Indeed, it had already given great dissatisfaction to my Government. I added, as moderately as I could, that, in all frankness, any further protraction of this relation could scarcely fail to be viewed by us as hostile in spirit, and to require some corresponding action accordingly. His Lordship then reviewed the course of Great Britain. He explained the mode

in which they had consulted with France, prior to any action at all, as to the reception of the deputation from the so-called Confederate States. It had been the custom, both in France and here, to receive such persons unofficially for a long time back. Poles, Hungarians, Italians, &c., &c., had been allowed interviews, to hear what they had to say. But this did not imply recognition in this case any more than in ours. He added, that he had seen the gentlemen once, some time ago, and once more, some time since; he had no expectation of seeing them any more."

Here, in the printed volume, follows a line of those mysterious asterisks, which indicate the suppression of something too dangerous or offensive for the outside world to know. We are left to conjecture whether Lord John reminded Mr. Adams of those days of exorbitant sympathy hereabouts, when Repeal meetings were attended by eminent Statesmen, when Kossuth was publicly received by the Senate and a Secretary of State; or even alluded to those later days, nearer our times, when fugitives from English and European justice have been elevated over the heads of native born citizens, to high military positions.\* All this is left for speculation. The interview, such as it was, does not seem—and this without any fault of Mr. Adams—to have done any particular good or promoted kind feeling. Still Mr. Adams wrote cheerfully, as late as the 21st and 28th of June.

"I am now," said he, "earnestly assured on all sides, that the sympathy with the Government of the United States is general; that the indignation felt in America, is not founded in reason; that the British desire only to be perfectly neutral,

---

\* Without meaning to put Garibaldi in either of these categories, it may not be inappropriate to say that, on the 27th July last, in the fresh panic for Bull Run, as we believe the archives of the State Department will show, Mr. Seward offered to that chieftain a command of the highest rank in our army. The ambulatory Mr. Sanford visited Caprera for this purpose early in September, in a Genoese steamer specially chartered for the occasion.

giving no aid and comfort to the insurgents. I believe that this sentiment is now growing to be universal. It inspires her Majesty's ministers, and is not without its effect on the opposition. Neither party would be so bold as to declare its sympathy with a cause based upon the extension of slavery; for that would at once draw upon itself the indignation of the great body of the people. But the development of a positive spirit in the opposite direction, will depend far more upon the degree in which the arm of the Government enforces obedience, than upon any absolute affinity in sentiments. Our brethren in this country are, after all, very much disposed to fall in with the opinion of Voltaire, that, "*Dieu est toujours sur le cote des gros canons.*" General Scott and an effective blockading squadron will be the true agents to keep the peace abroad as well as to conquer one at home. In the meanwhile, the self-styled commissioners of the insurgents have transferred their labors to Paris, where, I am told, they give out what they would not venture publicly to say here, that this Government will recognize them as a State. The prediction may be verified it is true; but it is not now likely to happen, under any other condition than the preceding assent of the United States.\*

"On the whole, I think I can say, that the relations of the two countries are gradually returning to a more friendly condition. My own reception has been all that I could desire. I attach value to this, however, only as it indicates the establishment of a policy that will keep us at peace during the continuation of the present convulsion."

All this, the Secretary of State seemed utterly unable to

---

\* Besides bad English, there are specimens of very questionable French in these papers. Mr. Adams does not quote Voltaire correctly; for surely no Frenchman ever said "*sur le cote*;" and Mr. Sanford leaves us in perplexity, when, speaking of the Belgian authorities, he says: "They would in no case make a treaty, which should bind them to the perpetual abolition of passports, *vis-a-vis* to my nation." -*Sanford to Seward, July 3, 1861.*

estimate properly; for in a despatch of July 1, he thus sullenly refers to it:

"I conclude with the remark that the British Government can never expect to induce the United States to acquiesce in her assumed position of this Government as divided in any degree, into two powers, for war more than for peace. At the same time, if her Majesty's Government shall continue to practice absolute forbearance from any interference in our domestic affairs, we shall not be captious enough to inquire what name it gives to that forbearance, or in what character it presents itself before the British nation, in doing so."

And again, as late as September 25th, he writes:

"I think that Great Britain will soon be able to see, what she has hitherto been unwilling to see, that if she, like ourselves, seeks peace and prosperity on this continent, she can most effectually contribute to their restoration by manifesting her wishes for the success of this Government in suppressing the insurrection as speedily as possible."

But, between July and September, the dates of these letters, new sources of annoyance had been opened. The battle of Manassas—described by Mr. Seward in one letter as a "deplorable reverse, equally severe and unexpected," and in another as "appalling,"—had occurred. In the region of diplomacy, affairs had become more cloudy. Mr. Seward had actively resumed his police duties. He had, in conjunction with the late Secretary of War, directed the arrest of many individuals, without warrant, or judicial authority, or investigation, and to this hour holds them in close custody, in a Northern fortress. Among them was a Mr. Muir, a naturalized citizen, and therefore amenable to the local laws, if properly directed against him, in whose possession was found a Consular mail bag from Charleston, directed to the English Foreign Office. Whether the breaking of its seals was or was not, according to the newspapers, the subject of grave deliberation in the Cabinet at Washing-

ton, or between the Secretary and Lord Lyons, we have no means of knowing; but one can hardly repress a smile, on learning from the documents now given to the world, that when it was at last formally delivered by Mr. Adams to Earl Russell and opened, its contents were found to be entirely innocent, and to consist principally of letters from English and Irish governesses and servant girls in South Carolina, making their little remittances to their friends and relatives in the old country.\* It is true, however, that this arrest did lead to the avowal of the fact, that before September, the English and French Governments had directed their consuls to approach the "so-called Confederate States," and propose to them adhesion to the Treaty of Paris, as to neutral rights, coupled, however, with the express assurance that "Her Majesty's Government have not recognized, and are not prepared to recognize, the so-called Confederate States, as a separate and independent State."

But Mr. Muir's arrest, (perhaps more justifiable under the circumstances than many others,) or, rather, the fact that the Federal Government had, in this and other instances, overturned nearly all Mr. Sumner's principles of inherited British law, and asserted an absolute military authority over liberty and property, created an irritation, and produced an impression abroad, as to which these despatches give no light. It at once destroyed confidence in American law, and, in doing so, fatally wounded American credit. How far this distrust and irritation were reasonable, this is not the place to inquire. The fact is so; and we but note in passing, that the many arrests and seizures which were deemed necessary to save the country at home, did it irreparable injury abroad. "There is," said Mr. Horsman, a liberal opposition member, to his constituents, "what seems to us a complete break-down of civil government."

---

\* Mr. Bunch to Lord Russell, August 5, 1861.

There is not a security that was established for liberty of speech, writing or motion, which is not swept away." This is rather overstated, but still the world regarded it with wonder; the Confederate States, in the vigorous language of Mr. Davis, "looked on with contemptuous astonishment" at what was done and submitted to; and we think we may venture to affirm that the Secretary of the Treasury, in the very crisis of his early financial operations, felt the great support of a foreign credit—the chance for a sale or hypothecation of his stocks abroad—dragged from beneath him, as faith in American law failed, and his colleagues of the State and War Departments were playing with the edge-tools of arbitrary arrests, and hurling their bolts at all they judged their foes.

The arrest of Mr. Muir revealed the fact to Mr. Adams that France and England had jointly made some advances to the Confederate States. Mr. Seward knew it long before; for, as far back as the 15th of June, Lord Lyons and M. Mercier made their visit to the Secretary, and communicated, or tried to do so, the intentions of their respective Governments to act in concert for the future. How Mr. Seward received that visit is well known, and need not be referred to in detail here. To one portion only, of his own account of it, do we allude now. It is the beginning and the end of his despatch:

"On the 15th day of June instant, Lord Lyons, the British Minister, and M. Mercier, the French Minister, residing here, had an appointed interview with me. Each of those representatives proposed to read to me an instruction which he had received from his Government, and to deliver me a copy, if I should desire it. I answered that, in the present state of the correspondence between their respective Governments and that of the United States, I deemed it my duty to know the character and effects of the instructions respectively, before I could consent that they could be officially communicated to this department. The



Ministers, therefore, confidentially and very frankly, submitted the papers to me, for preliminary inspection. After having examined them so far as to understand their purpose, I declined to hear them read, or to receive official notice of them."

It then concludes, sharply enough, with a fling at both :

"Hoping to have no occasion hereafter, to speak for the hearing of friendly nations, upon the topics which I have now discussed, I add a single remark by way of satisfying the British Government that it will do wisely by leaving us to manage and settle this domestic controversy in our own way. The fountains of discontent in any society are many, and in some lie much deeper than others. Thus far, this unhappy controversy has disturbed only those which are nearest the surface. There are others, which lie still deeper, that may yet remain, as we hope, long undisturbed. If they should be reached, no one can tell how or when they could be closed. It was foreign intervention that opened, and that alone could open, similar fountains in the memorable French Revolution."

That a Secretary of State may absolutely decline to receive a communication, addressed to him in a disrespectful or uncourteous manner, or even improperly superscribed, or sent by an unsuitable messenger, no one can dispute. Nay, further, he would have a perfect right to refuse to listen to a paper, unless the promise were given in advance, that a copy should be left with him, and this for the obvious reason that there would be no security to the listening party otherwise. On this point, we put in a note, an authority which may not be without interest.\* But we

---

\* Mr. Canning, in a letter to Lord Granville, at Paris, dated March 4, 1825, says: "The last three mornings have been occupied partly in receiving the three successive communications of Count Lieven, Prince Esterhazy and Baron Maltzahn, of the high and weighty displeasure of their courts with respect to Spanish America. Lieven led the way on Wednesday. He began to

venture to affirm that no precedent can be found, from the days of Frederick of Prussia and Napoleon—who were very apt to do uncivil and aggravating things to Ministers at their Courts—to Mr. Seward's, of a Secretary refusing to listen to a paper, when a copy was promised, until he should know what its contents were. That this was "frankly" and readily acquiesced in, shows no extreme tenaciousness on the part of those who sought the audience. We have not space to dwell further on the contents and reasoning of Mr. Seward's denunciatory letter, but simply note the facts connected with it, as items in the great account of mistakes and offences, for which, as it seems to us, he is responsible.

These were the incidents—this the style of correspondence, antecedent to the 7th of November, when Captain Wilkes boarded the Trent and seized the Confederate commissioners and their secretaries.

open a long despatch, evidently with the intention of reading it to me. I stopped *in limine*, desiring to know if he was authorized to give a copy of it. He said no; upon which I declined hearing it, unless he would give me his word that no copy would be sent to any other court. He said he could not undertake to say that it would not be sent to other Russian missions, but that he had no notion that *a copy of it* would be given to the courts at which they were severally accredited. I answered that I was either to have a copy of a despatch which might be quoted to foreign courts, (as former despatches had been,) as having been communicated to me and remaining unanswered; or to be able to say that no despatch had been communicated to me at all. 'It was utterly impossible for me,' I said, 'to charge my memory with the expressions of a long despatch once read over to me, or to be able to judge on one such hearing, whether it did or did not contain expressions which I ought not to pass over without remark. Yet, by the process now proposed, I was responsible to the King and to my colleagues, and ultimately, perhaps, to Parliament, for the contents of a paper which might be of the most essentially important character, and of which the text might be quoted hereafter by third parties as bearing a meaning which I did not on the instant attribute to it, and yet, which, upon bare recollection, I could not controvert.' Lieven was confounded. He asked me what he was to do? I said, what he pleased, but I took the exception now before I heard a word of his despatch, because I would not have it thought that the contents of the despatch, whatever they might be, had anything to do with that exception."

Of this grave event, in any of its relations of law, of fact, of probable consequences, we have neither space nor heart to speak. It has been fully discussed. It is too serious in its possible future. It is too mortifying in its past. A single word is due to candour, and the spirit of frankness in which these pages have been written. The act of Captain Wilkes was either right or it was wrong. It never was heroic, and never would have been called so, out of the heated, oratorical atmosphere of Boston, where wise and grave and learned men seem more fond of intellectual antics than anywhere else; and even at Boston we did not find such men as Winthrop and Appleton and Felton and Hillard in the crowd of precipitate enthusiasts. It was either simply right or terribly wrong. If right, it ought at all hazards to have been maintained the more resolutely, if one tithe of Mr. Seward's defiance of England were genuine. If wrong, it should have been at once disavowed, gracefully and voluntarily. And let it be borne in mind, when, bye and bye; the judgment of history is made up, that had it been disavowed and the captives been restored, either on account of the wrong committed in taking them, or because they are "old men," as Mr. Charles Sumner is so fond of describing them; or, because, as Mr. Seward now says, they are "valueless," Great Britain would have been absolutely in the power of the North, without pretext or excuse, if she needed one; and all our diplomatic gibes and sarcasms would have been condoned by this one act of frank self-respect and magnanimous self-condemnation. The disavowal of the attack of the Leopard on the Chesapeake, in 1807, and the apology made by the English Ministry, postponed war for five long years. We did neither. We hesitated about the narrow and simple question of right and wrong, and then surrendered under a querulous lawyerising protest; and at the moment these lines are written, no one is able to say what sort of a future each coming mail from Europe may reveal to us.

The Review of our diplomatic papers is now completed—imperfect as the writer feels it to be. Such as it is, he commends it to the generous judgment of his countrymen.

The challenge was thrown to the people of the North and their representatives, when this volume was prepared and published by the Secretary of State, and when the Chief Magistrate went into voluntary or involuntary eclipse. It has been taken up by one who has no thought, or hope, or prayer, but for his country's honor—for reconstruction of the Union, if it be possible, and if it be not, for honorable peace; and who, next to disunion and protracted civil war, deplores the disparagement of our good name, in the estimate of foreign nations. It may be that on the judgment and action of those nations, our future may depend, and as to what that future can or ought to be, wise and patriotic, and brave, and loyal men may widely differ.

If, by any method of war, the Government can be restored to what it was before this dreadful strife began, let us pray for the early consummation, with the least possible bloodshed, and with every merciful appliance of pardon, and amnesty, and reconciliation, that can be devised; and if it cannot—if peace and separation be inevitable—let us hope for the coming man amongst ourselves, who shall have mental and moral elevation to see the reality soonest, and not shrink from its recognition; who will bend all the energies of a great mind, (for such must be his,) to let the separation be made without further convulsion or more ghastly scars. Let the sorrowing friends of the Union hope at least for "*Euthanasia*." Let the Confederacies, if inevitable, be the reality of a great poet's idea:

They parted, ne'er to meet again!  
 But never either found another  
 To free the hollow heart from paining,  
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
 A dreary sea now flows between;  
*But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,*  
*Shall wholly do away, I ween*  
*The marks of that which once has been.*



**Hollinger**  
**pH 8.5**  
**Mill Run F03-2**